



## COMMUNITY INPUT

### Update for the Bond Election Advisory Task Force

#### May 14, 2012

This document is the eighth of regular updates to be provided to the Bond Election Advisory Task Force on community input received during the bond development process.

This report provides public comments and input received between May 9<sup>th</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2012 from the following sources:

- Comments provided via email sent to [bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov](mailto:bonddevelopment@austintexas.gov)
- Comments provided via the hotline (voicemail and texts) to 512-539-0060

The following comments were provided through one or more of those methods. (Organization of comments provided by staff.)

#### Affordable Housing - related comments

- I am a single mother of a six year-old, full-time tech support personnel, and part-time student. About a year ago, I found a sublease in an apartment in North Austin. I was not officially put on the lease because I was unable to pass the rental application's credit check. Planning ahead, I paid for the entire summer's rent in full with my tax return. A few weeks after I moved in, the landlord asked me to leave because I was not on the lease, causing me to lose hundreds of dollars. I did not want to risk getting evicted again and so wanted to sign a lease. Although I've never had a credit card, my financial history prevented my ability to get a lease at any apartment office. The City of Austin's Section 8 was not accepting new applications and their waiting list for public housing was in the thousands. Thankfully, I found out about Blackland and that there would be availability about a month after I moved out of the North Austin apartment. I stayed with a friend for that month before moving in. Since that time, Blackland has enabled me to spend the time, effort, and money on understanding and repairing my credit and building up my savings in preparation for moving on to a more successful time in my life. I recommend and support \$110 million of the bond package to be dedicated to affordable housing to help out families in temporary need, like mine. Please call me directly at (512)769-7231.

#### Parks & Open Space – related comments

- Please provide full funding to rebuild Dougherty Arts. Thank you.
- I support: **\$3 million for the Violet Crown Trail** which will connect over 100 miles of trails in central and south Austin And **\$175 million for parks and open space**.
- **Reduce the amount of the total bond package to \$100-200M maximum. \_Reduce the funding allocated to affordable housing to 17% of the total bond package, or \$17M-34M (or \$51M) for a total bond package of \$100M-200M (or \$300M).** The 17% ratio represents the ratio recommended by citizens (workshops and online survey) and the task advisory force. Affordable housing was listed by city staff as a non-urgent not near-term need requiring \$71M, but the task force increased this funding to \$111M. **\_More funding for neighborhood sidewalks and much less for trails.** Instead of the task force recommended \$30M for sidewalks and \$51.75M for trails, I recommend **\$45M for sidewalks and \$5.75M for trails** (for the near-term urgent needs such as greenbelts and preserves, and bikeways). **Fund only the projects that were identified as “urgent near-term needs” by city staff.** This quickly **reduces the total bond package from \$659M to \$300M.** Review these urgent needs and reduce further them to \$100-200M max. For instance, some of the “urgent needs” identified by staff in Parks and Open Spaces are not that urgent. I suspect the same applies to the other 3 categories **Fully fund the cemeteries to \$4M.** Currently they are receiving \$2M,

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but they need \$4M at least. The cemeteries have a critical urgent near-term need that was not identified by city staff, even though the cemeteries meet the 4 criteria to be included as an urgent near-term need: the cemeteries are a public safety issue, there is serious infrastructure failure (facilities, roads and irrigation), there is a significant degradation of services, and State law is not being followed. This funding is needed in part to **install new irrigation for heritage trees at 4 public cemeteries to prevent losing more irreplaceable heritage trees. Over 300 heritage trees have died** at Oakwood, Oakwood Annex, Evergreen and AMP in the last 4 years due to lack of water. Cemetery stakeholders support irrigation installation before restoration of historical facilities. **Fully fund the Dougherty Center to \$4M.** This was classified as an urgent near-term need, but it's only getting half of the funding that city staff identified. **Eliminate the \$15M for the Waller creek and trail improvements.** The Waller Creek Conservancy was formed to raise this money from private interests since this project will benefit developers significantly. **Many people oppose any bond funding to Waller Creek and associated trails, so this item alone may cause the bond package to not be approved by the citizens. Eliminate the \$9M to urban trails and grant matching programs.** This is a luxury in a time when so many people need sidewalks, which are basic services that the city should provide equitably to all neighborhoods **Eliminate the \$2.25M for renovation of the Barton Springs Pool bathhouse** because this is not necessary. The BSP bathhouse was recently brought up to code, has some remodeling and is ADA complaint. The majority of the community does not support the proposed renovations to the BSP bathhouse. \$6M has been spent at BSP already with various master plan projects, it's time to spend money fairly at other parks and recreational facilities **Eliminate the "Design of New Projects (Congress Ave. and Rainey St.)" for \$10M.** This was not identified by city staff in the original bond package. Funding can be obtained for these projects from alternative sources (private/public partnerships). Citizens proposed additional projects like the Planetarium, but none of these were included in the package. **Fully fund land acquisition for Watershed and PARD** even if city staff did not list this as an urgent near-term need. It's critical to purchase some land for preservation. **Trail and related projects totaling \$51.75M:** Connectivity Improvements \$2M, Greenbelts & Preserves \$4.25M, Waller Creek & trail improvement \$15M, Loop 360 Improvements \$15M, Austin to Manor trail \$1M, bikeways \$1.5M, Mopac bicycle bridge \$4M, Urban trails and grant match projects \$9M **Eliminate the following non-urgent, not near-term, projects:** Affordable Housing: Projects were not classified as urgent needs, therefore reduce the amount to represent the 17% ratio that citizens and the task force are using. City Facilities: Eliminate the "fire maintenance and breathing shops", the "Onion Creek fire station", the "air operations unit", the "911 dispatch center expansion", and the "South District and Walnut Creek facilities". Parks and Open spaces: Eliminate "connectivity improvements", "downtown squares", "Elizabeth Ney Museum renovations", "Seaholm facility redevelopment", "sustainability improvements", "Waterloo park improvements", "Zilker BSP bath house renovation", "Zilker clubhouse renovation", "neighborhood plan parks improvements and open space program", and "Waller Creek and trail improvement". Transportation/Mobility: Eliminate "Airport Blvd. Corridor", "FM 969 corridor improvements", "IH 35 improvements", "loop 360 improvements", "Mopac improvements", "North Lamar and riverside corridor improvements", "Plaza Saltillo plan", "6<sup>th</sup> Congress Ave. to IH 35 improvements", "Austin to Manor trail", "design of new projects", and "Urban trail and grant match projects".

- This Austin Arts School needs to stay a live . It's a huge part of our community and the arts in Austin . As an artist I held 2 installations at the DAC gallery in 1998 & 2000 . I received

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funding from Cultural Contracts for both of these exhibits - POOLS & POOLS 2. Both exhibits received much traffic and media attention both newspaper and tv. Out of those exhibits some of these art works are now in permanent collections. One work is in PARD's **Edward's Aquifer Exhibit** at Barton Springs and 6 other works are owned by the YMCA of Austin- East Communities. My life has evolved and now I am also an Educator at the DAC teaching digital photography and b/w darkroom. This is only my story with the DAC. There are countless other citizens of Austin who have been profoundly touched by all that the Dougherty Arts Center offers. The DAC is such an important role in The City of Austin. If the DAC is not kept alive and thriving part of Austin's soul will be lost. Please, please fund the Dougherty Arts Center with the 9 million needed!

- I'm a 26-year-old Austinite born and raised in Austin. Protecting Barton Springs is very important to me because my friends and I have enjoyed it for years. Thank you for supporting permanent protection of Barton Springs watershed lands. I urge you to keep the \$57 million in the final recommendations in the November bond election so that we may protect critical watershed lands before they are developed. I ask that you prioritize Barton Springs protection over projects that would further develop Zilker Park or the Barton Springs watershed.
- There seems to be some misunderstanding as to what the cemetery dollars were to be used for. The wording I saw on a handout said that the first priority for the use of the money would be trees. I should have read the priority would be for infrastructure like irrigation systems, building, roads. Trees would be taken care of if the irrigation systems were adequate. Please consider changing the wording on the request since many on the Parks and Open Spaces task force do not remember that they approved the wording about trees. Also, please consider the full original request of \$4,000,000 which is needed for our cemetery system.
- Thank you for supporting permanent protection of Barton Springs watershed lands. Please keep the \$57 million bond for purchasing watershed protection lands in the final recommendations so that we may protect critical watershed lands before they are developed. You should prioritize Barton Springs protection over projects that would further develop Zilker Park or the Barton Springs watershed.
- Thank you for supporting permanent protection of Barton Springs watershed lands. Please keep the \$57 million in the final recommendations so that we may protect critical watershed lands before they are developed. Please prioritize Barton Springs protection over projects that would further develop Zilker Park or the Barton Springs watershed.
- Please provide full funding to rebuild the Dougherty Arts Center. Thank you.
- I wish to express my enthusiastic support for the \$3 million in funds for the Violet Crown Trail, another \$175 million for parks and open space, and Phases 1 and 2 of the Mopac Bicycle Bridge at Barton Creek. These initiatives are of paramount importance for our city's balanced development and green urban landscape.
- I support completely all the watershed bond funds as currently proposed. Please do not cut any of these critical funds.
- The Save Our Springs Alliance respectfully requests that you maintain your currently recommended \$57 million for permanent watershed protection/open space in your final recommendations. Please know that purchasing additional key tracts of land in the Barton Springs watershed at this time is essential to protecting Barton Springs and the investments we have made to protect the springs. Starting in 1992, Austin initiated a series of bond financed investments in purchasing land and conservation easements to protect Barton Springs flows, provide parks and open space for recreation, and preserve habitat for endangered species. These investments have been critical to preserving the quality and

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quantity of flows to Barton Springs, Barton Creek and Lady Bird Lake. As Austin continues to grow and the economy recovers, we remain in a race to secure additional lands for watershed protection and low-impact recreation before development takes hold. Funding additional acquisition now will help us protect our past investments and avoid even greater expenditures in the future to extend roads and utilities to serve far-flung developments that threaten our springs. It is, quite literally, cheaper to save the Barton Springs watershed than it is to pave it. The City has an excellent track record for spending watershed protection bond funds wisely. These purchases have saved us from needing to extend Mopac or Escarpment beyond Circle C, or expand south Mopac, 1826 and many other roads. Many of these conservation purchases have directly displaced large, planned developments that would have increased pollution of, and groundwater pumping from, the Barton Springs Edwards Aquifer. Taken together with land protection efforts by Travis and Hays counties and various private parties, we have built the core of a park, watershed preserve and open space system that will protect our most vulnerable watersheds and our City's Hill Country setting. We need to continue expanding these protected lands before intense development pressures build up again. Thank you for recommending the \$57 million proposal and we ask that you maintain this recommendation in your final report. In the event that you are weighing investments in watershed protection against investments in the Zilker service barn, Zilker clubhouse, and/or Zilker bathhouse, please place your priorities on protecting the Barton Springs watershed. We are not aware that any of these structures are in critical need of immediate, million dollar-plus investments in order to preserve their usefulness. If they are, this is not generally known. We are also concerned about proposed funding for Loop 360 improvements that may add pavement and pollution to the Barton Creek watershed, although we are not clear on the details of the proposal. By contrast, key watershed lands are under immediate threat of development. Last year City Watershed Protection staff published reports showing that Barton Springs water quality has suffered significantly from polluted runoff and wastewater irrigation facilities that serve lands developed in the Barton Springs watershed over the last decade or so. By making funds available for land purchases now, we have the opportunity to erase thousands of acres of planned development and the wastewater facilities that would serve that development. Thank you for your service to our community and for your consideration. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [bill@sosalliance.org](mailto:bill@sosalliance.org).

- Please keep the 57,000,000 in the original proposal and stop any development that would harm the springs.
- Thank you for protecting Barton Springs, please stay with the \$57 set aside for purchasing lands to protect our treasure...the Barton Springs!
- It is vital for protect the hydrology of the Barton Springs watershed which has a defined and limited catchment area, flow, and is vital to protect both for drinking water, water quality, and habitat. I appreciate your work to date to recommend watershed protections and conservation easements---extremely valuable economically and environmentally to have nearby given increasing urbanization. Pls keep the proposed \$57 million allotment particular to the Barton Springs watershed, a major watershed strongly deserving protection at many levels.
- Please make sure that parks and open space are well-represented in the upcoming bond package. Please include funding for the MoPac bike/ped bridge over Barton Creek all phases. This is an important connection from SW Austin to Zilker Park and downtown. Current plans include a separate hike/bike bridge over Barton Creek (which frees up an extra vehicle lane on MoPac) and a bridge over Loop 360 (site of many bike/car accidents). This is a safe solution to getting around without a car. Please also include funding for the Violet Crown

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Trail (Walk for a Day Trail) which is another alternative transportation link in SW Austin. This trail can be used to get around or for recreation and tourism. Lastly, we need around \$175 million in the bond package for parks and open space. Especially in SW Austin we have a lack of active recreation space. We also need more water quality land before it all get developed. We need to use open space land for both environmental and recreation purposes and need money to make it happen. Austin is known for its natural beauty, parks, and bike friendly infrastructure. However, we have a ways to go to make the city first class in alternative transportation and outdoor recreation. This bond package needs to continue our strong investment in these areas.

- I'm writing regarding the **Dougherty** Cultural Arts Center. We need to keep this center for all the people who use it. It is an important part of my quality of life here in Austin. I go to the theater there, take classes, and visit the museum. If it has to be moved, then find a place nearby as it is an important part of Austin culture.
- Thank you for your efforts to protect the Barton Springs watershed. I've lived in Austin since 1980 and have loved going to Barton Springs for decades. I've seen a lot of changes in Austin over the years, and treasure what seems to be a diminishing amount of green space. I'm amazed at the number of people that use the city's green belts and feel that Austin would be best served by increasing the city's park lands and green spaces while the land is still available. I hope that you will do everything in your power to maintain the \$57M amount previously recommended to protect the watershed.

#### Transportation/Mobility - related comments

- **(NOTE: This comment was repeated 73 times)**

I am writing to show my support for funding for bicycling and walking in the 2012 Austin Bond Election. In addition to the funding that is in the current draft package, I urge you to include the following: **1) Restore funding for City Wide Bikeways to \$3 million from \$1.5 million.**

This additional funding would go a long way toward creating a family friendly bike network that is available to everyone to use.

Note that this is still less than the City Staff stated needs of \$3.25MM. **2) Restore funding for the Pleasant Valley Road widening at \$0.95 million.**

This is the only bridge between I-35 and U.S. 183 that connects Southeast Austin with East Austin, yet it is arguably the worst, most dangerous river bridge crossing in Central Austin. These are two communities that have high percentages of households without cars, and this project would take important steps toward filling a gap in the bicycle network.

When the Butler trail is soon extended by the Boardwalk, many more people will be using the Pleasant Valley bridge to make a loop around Lady Bird Lake, so funding improvements in this bond election is likely the last opportunity before the Boardwalk opens. **3) Add the 51st Street complete street project at \$3.5 million, a Community-Based Project.**

This roadway project would include physically separated bikeways to provide family friendly connectivity in Northeast Austin. **4) Add the Violet Crown Trail at \$3 million, a Community-Based Project.**

This would fund one segment of a regional trail, connecting Austin to communities southward. It would also provide neighborhood connectivity, separated from motor traffic.

Thank you for your consideration and time

- Also of critical importance is the **Mopac Bicycle Bridge at Barton Creek Phase 1 and 2.**
- Please include funding for the 43rd & Duval Improvements Project in your recommendations to the City Council. The Hyde Park Contact Team, Hyde Park Neighborhood Association



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and Hancock Neighborhood Association all adopted resolutions in support of the project. This century-old commercial hub is a very busy intersection that serves all of its neighbors and is in need of these safety and community improvements to serve all who access these local businesses on foot, by bicycle, by bus and by car. Please restore at least the \$250,000 previously allocated for the project in the CIP to move this project forward.

- Please include funding for the 43rd & Duval Improvements Project in your recommendations to the City Council. The Hyde Park Contact Team, Hyde Park Neighborhood Association and Hancock Neighborhood Association all adopted resolutions in support of the project. This century-old commercial hub, is a very busy intersection that serves all of its neighbors and is in need of these safety and community improvements to serve all who access these local businesses on foot, by bicycle, by bus and by auto. Please restore at least the \$250,000 previously allocated for the project in the CIP, to move this project forward. We appreciate your support.
- Please prioritize the 2012 bond funding to focus on transportation projects that alleviate congestion on roads such as Mopac, 360, IH-35, Burnet, and Lamar.
- I had the pleasure of serving with several of you in 2006 on the BEAC and others I have visited with in the last several months. To all of you, I thank you for your willingness to commit the countless hours you are spending evaluating the numerous worthy projects being presented to you for consideration. There are so many needs and so little public resources available that you have a near impossible task. That said, one category rises to the top of the priority scale in my mind and that is our long neglected transportation system. Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. For that reason, **transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election.** In 2006, we included funds to rebuild and restore some of our major arterials, but not a dollar was spent increasing capacity. Since then, we have experienced approximately 200,000 new residents driving on our streets. In 2010, we approved almost \$100 million in “transportation” projects, but precious little of those dollars were spent increasing capacity - most of the money was allocated to sidewalks, bike lanes, boardwalks and other worthwhile quality of life enhancements – but not transportation. **You can make a difference by focusing on increasing capacity on our local highways and arterials this time around.** I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. This is a critical moment in our city’s history with respect to transportation. If we don’t act soon, it may be too late. If you are still reading, thank you for listening, and, most of all, thank you for serving.
- You have requested traffic data for the 43rd & Duval project area. We have received some traffic data from city staff, but some of it is 14 years old from the initiation of this project so we have requested an update. You have asked also that we provide cost estimates for the 43rd & Duval Improvement project. We are meeting with Public Works next week to begin to determine costs, but will not likely meet your deadline for making recommendations to the City Council. We are asking now that you at least recommend reinstating the \$250,000 previously allocated for the project in the CIP in 1998, in order to move this project forward. This would help city staff to plan and engineer the public improvements, coordinate with our private improvements and identify public cost requirements. We have met with City Transportation and Planning staff over the last year and revised the project to current standards. We have participated in and hosted various community meetings over the last year and The Hyde Park Contact Team, Hyde Park Neighborhood Association and Hancock Neighborhood Association all adopted resolutions in support of the project. We have the support of businesses and property owners. We would very much like to keep this support

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and momentum moving ahead. We greatly appreciate your service on this Task Force and your attention to this project.

- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. Each month my commute to work extends a few extra minutes causing me to miss that extra time with my family. *I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet.*
- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet.
- Every year Central Texans spend hours sitting in traffic me included. Transportation MUST be the top priority for every bond election starting this November and remain our top priority until Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion. I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects on our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service.
- Every year Central Texans spend hours sitting in traffic. Transportation MUST be the top priority for every bond election starting this November and remain our top priority until Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion. I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects on our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet.
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- Every year Central Texans spend hours sitting in traffic. Transportation MUST be the top priority for every bond election starting this November and remain our top priority until Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion. I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects on our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service.
- **Please consider roadway and transportation improvements as the highest priority for inclusion in the upcoming bond election.** Austin citizens have consistently identified transportation and mobility as one of the biggest problems that our city and region faces. This problem degrades quality of life equally for ALL of our citizens, without regard for socio-economic status. In particular, projects that enhance the IH 35, Mopac and SL 360 corridors (i.e. our major corridors) should be given priority. In addition, air quality is becoming an increasing concern in our City, and congestion is a primary driver of poor air quality. Support for reduced congestion/increased mobility is good for the environment!
- We all strive to maintain Austin's quality of life. No matter how we paint the picture we will continue to see growth and people migrating to Austin. We need to realize the impact of our transportation system in maintaining our quality of life. Lack of a multimodal efficient system Austin will lose it's luster and it will impact our children's future. Every year Central Texans spend hours sitting in traffic. Transportation MUST be the top priority for every bond election starting this November and remain our top priority until Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion. We will lose our competitive edge if we do not do enough to

manage our congestion. It will impact our quality of life. As an everyday commuter of Mopac, IH 35, RM 2222 and Loop 360, I lose my productivity by sitting in traffic rather than at office or home. It is not acceptable for me to sit in traffic and not be with my family. As members of the Task Force, I respectfully request you to fund projects that will address the congestion problem in a significant way. We can't wait any longer.... I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects on our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service.

- Every year Central Texans spends countless hours sitting in traffic and missing out on opportunities to enjoy a maximum quality of life. By making transportation a top priority for every bond election starting this November until we have dramatically improved this condition and Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion, makes both economical and environmental good sense. I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects in our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet. On a separate but important issue that will be also addressed by your Task Force, I encourage your support in accepting City Staff's recommendation for improving the infrastructure on East 12th street. This corridor serves as a gate way to downtown and should no longer be neglected. *We appreciate your efforts to encourage the City to leverage funds with organizations such as TxDOT, Travis Count, the Federal Government, and other regional authorities to address this growing challenge from a regional perspective. Thank you for your continued leadership that will be required to make tough decisions that will improve the quality of life for all who commutes through or lives in Central Texas.*
- Please prioritize the 2012 bond funding to focus on transportation projects that alleviate congestion on roads such as Mopac, 360, IH-35, Burnet, and Lamar.
- Please include funding for the 43rd & Duval Improvements Project in your recommendations to the City Council. The Hyde Park Contact Team, Hyde Park Neighborhood Association and Hancock Neighborhood Association all adopted resolutions in support of the project. This century-old commercial hub, is a very busy intersection that serves all of its neighbors and and is in need of these safety and community improvements to serve all who access these local businesses on foot, by bicycle, by bus and by auto. Please restore at least the \$250,000 previously allocated for the project in the CIP, to move this project forward. We appreciate your support.
- Every year Central Texans spend hours sitting in traffic. Transportation MUST be the top priority for every bond election starting this November and remain our top priority until Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion. I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects on our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service.
- My name is Mike Hirsch. I am the President of the Hancock Neighborhood Association. I am writing to inform you that during our January 2012 meeting the Hancock Neighborhood Association overwhelming voted in favor of improvements to the 43<sup>rd</sup> and Duval intersection and adjacent businesses. The improvements we voted for included measure to calm traffic, clearly designate a pedestrian cross walk and sidewalk, driveway and curb improvements. This small business area is a vital commercial district in a heavily residential part of Austin. The safety of pedestrian and bike traffic are of paramount concern to our neighborhood. We think that the modifications suggested for this area will increase safety, revitalize commercial activity and increase revenues for our local businesses and the City of



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Austin. We ask that you prioritize this redevelopment effort. I thank you for your time and attention!

- On behalf of the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, I would like to thank each of you for your work in planning for the 2012 Bond Election. You have a formidable task in that the identified needs are far greater than the practically achievable revenue. In your efforts to reflect the community's priorities, I hope that you will keep in mind the importance of maintaining and adding to our transportation system by prioritizing projects that are likely to deal most effectively with congestion of traffic. These projects will include maintaining what we have as well as building new infrastructure. As the Chamber attempts to develop economic opportunities in our region, we were able to point to a broad range of positives. However, most companies with whom we are visiting (including those who are already here and considering expansion as well as those considering a relocation to the Austin area) identify traffic congestion as the single greatest challenge for the region. And traffic congestion is not simply an issue for economic development, it is also an important quality of life issue for all of us who live in this community. Accordingly, it is my hope that among all of the priorities you are attempting to balance, you will give most considerable weight to the transportation needs of our community.
- Every year Central Texans spend hours sitting in traffic. Transportation MUST be the top priority for every bond election starting this November and remain our top priority until Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion. I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects on our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet.
- I encourage you to give strong support for transportation projects that will alleviate peak hour congestion in the proposed bond package now under review. Seton Healthcare Family supports such efforts for several reasons: Improving safety -- Congested roadways are a contributing factor to accidents that cause injuries, many of which are serious. Improving health -- Congested roadways, clogged with slow-moving vehicles, are a significant cause of ozone and air pollution, which aggravates respiratory diseases such as asthma and emphysema. Improving access to health care -- Congested roadways can impact the ability of individuals and emergency vehicles to get to medical care at physician offices and hospitals in a timely way. Improving productivity -- Congested roadways make it more difficult and stressful for employees, including our 12,000 associates, to get to their place of work. We appreciate your consideration and your work in behalf of our community. Thank you.
- We in the Austin area spend hundreds of hours every year sitting in traffic. This results in a disastrous effect on business, maintenance, and the environment. We live in one of the most modern cities in the world and have an unacceptable traffic problem year after year. The bond funding on transportation projects is about to be decided by you and transportation must be the top bond priority starting this November and remain our top priority until Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion. This is a problem that can be solved if courageous decisions and dedication to solving this problem are made. I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects on our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet
- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for the upcoming bond election. I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your consideration and your service.
- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending the majority of the 2012

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bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. *Thank you for your service.*

- As a native Austinite, I am definitely not a newcomer to Austin's traffic woes. When I worked for the CofA Planning Dept while attending UT in the late 60's, I saw glorious maps and aerials with planned north-south and crosstown expressways, all of which have now been built in San Antonio using dollars our esteemed leaders, in their desire to maintain the 'small town feel', decided we didn't need. As we sit at various times on MoPark (two weeks back my wife and I spent over an hour and a half getting from 183 to the Bee Cave Road exit - and we started well before the 'rush hour' time), I35 (don't you just wish you go really go 35 on it), and our cross town thoroughfares which only serve to leave one thoroughly frustrated, we are all now paying the price for poorly made past decisions. Bike lanes, sidewalks and boardwalks don't get the job done; rail is not the panacea. It's time for Austin to commit real dollars to real solutions that have a positive impact on real people - those with jobs, families and activities that pay the taxes and fees that fund this great place. Please allocate these precious bond dollars to projects which give us some much needed and well deserved congestion relief.
- Please include funding for the 43rd & Duval Improvements Project in your recommendations to the City Council. Especially important are the safety improvements for this intersection. These include: Reverse angle parking on Duval to enhance bicycle safety. Install 43rd Street crosswalk at Avenue H to slow traffic. Relocate the north part of the Avenue H/Duval alley for pedestrian safety. Enhance bus stop facilities. Keep speed limit on Duval below 30 mph. I frequently drive on Duval through this intersection and am disturbed by the current tendency of traffic to speed up as it approaches 43rd street after slowing down for speed bumps to the south and north of this intersection. Clear crosswalks (ideally with a pedestrian-initiated stoplight on Duval) and other enhancements for pedestrians crossing Duval and 43rd St. are sorely needed. (I frequently drive past the pedestrian-initiated stoplights on Guadalupe and 45th Street, and consider them definite improvements for both pedestrians and traffic.) Duval is also heavily used by bicyclists; switching to reverse angle parking should make the area safer for them as well as pedestrians and motorists.
- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service.
- Every year Central Texans spend hours sitting in traffic. Transportation MUST be the top priority for every bond election starting this November and remain our top priority until Austin is no longer at the top of the list for congestion. I encourage you to spend a majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects on our most congested corridors that address peak hour congestion such as IH 35, SL 360, Mopac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service.
- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Thank you for your service.
- I urge you to focus the majority of the proposed bond issue to addressing roadway traffic congestion throughout Austin. We must minimize wasteful, ineffective spending and focus maximum transportation funds to this goal if we are to maintain Austin's desirability and high quality of life. Currently almost 50% of CAMPO's planned transportation funds through 2035 are allocated to non-roadway projects to serve some 1% of passenger miles

traveled. This will have no positive impact on overall congestion or quality of life for the vast majority of the area's citizens. It will decrease funding availability for high priority transportation projects resulting in increasing congestion. Some 99% of all passenger miles are on our roadways and the only way to significantly improve mobility is to reduce roadway congestion. This has been proven in many cities and here in Austin when aggressive roadway and intersection capacity increases began in the early to mid 2000's time period and reversed a 2 decade trend in increasing congestion, which peaked in 2005, and started a declining trend (as shown in Texas Transportation Institute Mobility Report data). During this improving congestion trend, public transit has experienced a decreasing ridership trend and has not been a contributor to decreasing overall roadway congestion. Population growth is continuing and we must keep pace with it by continuing to address major roadway and intersection bottlenecks. Mobility is directly related to quality of life and the "American Dream." Everyone deserves the opportunity to be the best they can and want to be by having access to opportunity. We must urgently address such roadway projects as MoPac, Loop 360, The Y at Oak Hill, 183 south and others before they become stifling. Appropriate 'Managed Lanes' with variable tolls, such as proposed for MoPac, can also provide significantly public transit improvements, encourage car pooling and improve emergency response. This is the most efficient use of lane capacity. From a land use standpoint, high population density is a major contributor to congestion. Throughout the developed world: higher density equals higher congestion. Density may provide a little less driving per capita but the high density provides more driving per square mile and increased congestion. Austin's developing downtown plan will increase congestion in that area. Converting one-way to two-way streets and reducing lane capacity will slow traffic and increase congestion. The dichotomy is that an urban rail is proposed to relieve the congestion. It will actually increase congestion because it further reduces lane capacity as it mingles with people and cars on the key streets. All of these changes create additional safety hazards.

- Please do not cut any bicycle or pedestrian funding from this year's bond package. Austin seriously lacks decent pedestrian infrastructure. More pedestrians than ever are being run over by people in cars. Another pedestrian was just killed while walking on the Town Lake hike and bike trail. This is no time to cut pedestrian and bicyclist funding. Instead of being cut, pedestrian and bicyclist funding should be vastly increased. Three-fourths of our curbside miles still lack sidewalk. When is this going to be fixed? Please don't make things worse by cutting funds for bicyclist and pedestrian infrastructure. Thank you.
- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, and North Lamar/Burnet. Austin is spending way too much money on bicycle lanes, when most of our traffic gets around in cars – we need street improvements for cars, and more lanes. I am writing to request you scale back these special interest group funding for bicycling and walking in the 2012 Austin Bond Election. Most of this movement of adding bicycle lanes has been a one-sided special interest group, well managed by a small set of people, not the Austin majority. They get their special interest supporters organized and out in large groups, to make it appear to be Austin supported. On the other hand, the Austin majority, who favor cars, are not well organized, or even know all of dealings of the biking minority. We car owners pay large taxes for our roads, and bikers do not pay their fair share, in getting roads, that they ride on. In addition to scaling back or

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removing this funding that is in the current draft package, I urge you to include the following 1) **Remove funding for City Wide Bikeways** 2) **Remove funding for the Pleasant Valley Road widening** Thank you for your consideration and time,

- Austin has some of the most highly-congested corridors in the state. Transportation projects should be a top priority for this bond election. I support spending the majority of the 2012 bond funding on transportation projects that address peak-hour congestion such as I-35, MoPac, 360 and North Lamar/Burnet.

#### Other Comments

- I urge to, please, recommend a **wise small bond package of \$100-200M maximum**. Utility bills and taxes have increased significantly in the last 2 years, and many people like me can't afford additional increases. The bond capacity analysis provided by city staff predicts a tax increase that is not representative of what will really occur. The tax increase predicted (\$38 yearly for a \$200K home for a bond package of \$385M, \$83 for \$625M) is based on only increasing the tax bracket, but residential appraisals will increase which will create a much higher yearly tax increase for the citizens. This tax increase is for the rest of our lives, and it will get compounded with future tax increases to finance other bonds (urban rail) and for the city budget. It will snowball and soon, many people like me won't be able to afford to live in Austin. The city is doing a disservice to the citizens by not concentrating on providing the basic needs like providing sidewalks where there are none, repairing deteriorating sidewalks, updating existing sidewalks to be ADA compliant, and repairing deteriorating existing facilities. These should be the priorities for the bonds instead of more infrastructure that can't be maintained or trails that are not basic necessities compared to sidewalks. City staff has presented a long list of "urgent near-term needs" and other projects, every need and desire. And the citizens task force has included some of these near-term projects as well as many of the projects that city staff does not consider urgent, for a bond package totaling \$659M. This long list has to be narrowed down to valid "urgent needs". The city couldn't keep up with all of the projects if more than \$200M were approved because current city staff is already working as hard as they can. More city staff would have to be hired to manage the additional bond projects, but there are no FTEs open in the budget. This bond package will only create additional jobs for consultants and contractors, because the city can't hire additional staff unless more money is added to the budget. It is not wise to approve this extremely high bond package all at once. There is no doubt that each project is a good one and would benefit the citizens, but many neighborhoods in south, east and north Austin are missing the basics that a city should provide, like sidewalks and roads, so it's critical to prioritize and approve the very important and very needed projects only, and leave the luxuries for alternative funding (such as private partnerships). While this large bond package will be proposed, the city budget continues to be tight and not able to keep up with maintenance of current facilities. Every year, the city contemplates closing libraries and swimming pools, reduces the budget of the libraries and park department to the bare minimum. Consequently, heritage trees, parks, cemeteries and recreational facilities go without maintenance. Why is the city adding new facilities and trails when they can't maintain what we have? It's becoming apparent to me that Austin is becoming a **discriminatory city** where there is a small elite group of people who can afford the luxuries and are active and vocal and get council support and funding for items that are nice but not necessarily urgent, but that suit their lifestyles better. But, all of the citizens of Austin pay for these. **There are many neighborhoods in north, south and east Austin that don't have**



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**sidewalks** but there is an emphasis in the bond package to fund a significant amount of trails and bicycle projects, while at the same time the funding for sidewalks was reduced by \$15M. I support connectivity but sidewalks are a basic need that has higher priority than trails. I know the bond task force wants to distribute the bond package through out Austin in an equitable manner, but there is a disproportional spread of priorities in the proposed bond package. There are many people that need sidewalks urgently so that they don't have to walk in the streets and run the risk of getting run over by cars, therefore the bonds should fund sidewalks before they fund trails. But, the Bond Advisory force proposes only \$30 M for sidewalks and \$51.75 M for trails. Please, change this and recommend instead **\$45M for sidewalks and \$5.75M for trails** (for only the near-term urgent needs trail projects such as greenbelts and preserves, and bikeways). Please, eliminate from the bond package any project that was not classified as an "urgent near-term need" by city staff, with a few exemptions. See a list of these non-urgent items below.